

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SR-18 FROM NORTH OF MEDON-MALESUS ROAD
TO SR-5 (US-45)

MADISON COUNTY DESIGN PUBLIC MEETING

SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

5:00 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M.

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

REGION 4 COMPLEX

300 BENCHMARK PLACE

JACKSON, TN 38301

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NICHOLE LAWRENCE: I would like to welcome you here to our public meeting regarding State Route 18 in Madison County. My name is Nichole Lawrence. I'm the community relations officer for TDOT here in Jackson. We do appreciate your attendance tonight because we know you are all very busy. A special thank you to State Representative Jimmy Eldridge for being here as well. A couple of house rules as we go through the night. You all see the exits. You all came in on them; they're the same way.

During our presentation tonight, Barry Alexander from Neel-Schaffer will go through it with you. Once that's over, we have the question and answer part of the program. Please say your name and address so that our court reporter can record all of these comments.

BARRY ALEXANDER: Can everybody hear me okay? All right. Thank you, Nichole. My name is Barry Alexander. I am with Neel-Schaffer Engineering. We're the design engineers for the project, working for TDOT on the development of the plans. We appreciate everybody coming tonight. What we're going to try to do is give you some general information through this presentation about the project, and then we really want

to hear what you think. After the presentation, we're going to do a short question-and-answer session. Then we've got plans scattered around the room. We've got them displayed on the wall. We'll be around, circulating around, so if you need to ask us questions, we can help you understand what you're seeing. That's the main purpose of this meeting, to hear your thoughts on the project, what you like or don't like, and what you think should be done differently.

First, just a quick introduction of who everybody is. My name is Barry Alexander. I'm the project manager with Neel-Schaffer Engineering. We're the design engineers. We also have representatives here from TDOT Region 4 Project Development. Seth Hendren and Gary Scruggs are the managers that are here for TDOT in charge of this project. We have some representatives from the TDOT right-of-way office. If there are questions about the right-of-way acquisition process, they can help answer those. And then other representatives from Neel-Schaffer that work with me that will help you interpret the plans.

The schedule for tonight's meeting, we're going to start out with a brief presentation and talk about some of the general aspects and general

design criteria of the job, and then we'll follow that up with a question-and-answer session where we talk about more of the general questions you have about the project. Then we'll move into an open house where you can look at the plans, look at the displays. There, we can answer more specific questions that may be specific to your property and how it might affect you.

After that, after you've got your questions answered and after you've seen the plans, then the important thing is we need to get feedback. There are a couple of ways for you to do the feedback. One, we've got two court reporters in the room. I'm sorry, one court reporter in the room that you can give a verbal statement to. She'll take it down and it will be part of the record of the meeting. Also, when you came in, you were given comment cards. You can fill these out. If you know tonight what you want to say, you can write it on there and leave it in the drop-box out by the sign-in table where you came in. Or if you want to go home and think about it a little bit, you can mail this back in. You have 21 days, I believe, to mail them in. That's October 3rd that they would need to be in. The address is already on it. It's the TDOT office in Nashville. They do not come back here. They

go to Nashville and then they're routed back here.

As I said, the purpose of this meeting is to give you an overview of the project and let you look at the plans. These are preliminary plans. They're still a work in process. There are still things that we need to change, and part of those changes will come from your suggestions, your thoughts. So that's why this is an integral part of the whole process of the design of the project.

The overall project begins on the south end sort of in the Medon area, where the south end of Medon-Malesus Road comes into Highway 18. The project will begin about half a mile north of there, and it will go all the way on up in Jackson and almost to the intersection of Highway 45. I'll show you some more details of exactly where it will start and stop here in a little while. That's overall about a 6.3-mile project. It's a good-size project.

One main reason for doing this project is to improve the safety of this route. There's a couple of ways we're going to attempt to do that. What we're proposing are some improvements that would make the roadway safer. First of all, anybody that has driven the project knows right now you don't have much

shoulders. If you have to pull off, there's not much room there. Then there's a steep drop-off on the side, some deep ditches and that kind of thing.

The first way we're going to try to improve it would be through the beginning of the project from Medon on up to about the Jackson city limits, the road would still be a two-lane roadway and still the same alignment that it is now. We're proposing to add wider shoulders. As you can see on the diagram up there, instead of where you've got now 2- or 3-foot wide shoulders, this would be 10-foot wide shoulders. Eight feet of that would be paved. So if you have a flat tire or something and have to pull off, there's room to get off the road and be safe and get out of the traffic lanes. Beyond those shoulders, also would be that the slopes will be much safer slopes, more gentle slopes instead of the steep drop-offs that are there now. If a car does go off, they've got a safer area out to the side of the road.

Once we get into the Jackson city limits area, just north of Southwood Drive on Highway 45, that's a more urbanized area of the highway, so we're going with a more urban-type roadway section. What's proposed there would be still one travel lane in each

direction, but it would add a center turn lane, a left-turn left. The left-turning cars that are turning into the side roads and driveways can get out of the way and let the other cars go through. Also included are 6-foot shoulders to the side, curb and gutter and sidewalks, a grass strip separating the curb and gutter from the sidewalk so there's room for your mailbox to be in there and not be sitting on the sidewalk. Again, beyond the sidewalks are more gentle slopes that make for a safer roadside.

There is a second way that we're looking to improve the safety of the road. I'm sure you all are probably familiar with it right now, but there is a lot of up and down to that road. It's like a roller coaster in places. You can't see very far ahead of you in a lot of spots. You can't see people pulling out of their driveways and side roads. If there is a slow-moving piece of equipment or something, you can't see to go around them. We're going to try to help that some as part of this. We've got the up and down, and we're going to try to raise the low spots, basically, and lower the high spots and give a much more gentle profile to the road where you've got better sight distance and can see what's going on out in front of

you better and just make it overall safer. So that's just an overall view generally of what we're trying to do.

Now, there are some specific areas I wanted to highlight. The first is I just wanted to show you for context where the project will begin. Down at the bottom of the screen there you see Medon-Malesus Road. That's the south end of Medon-Malesus Road. Then going up the screen and going toward Jackson, you've got four or five houses there on the left side if you're headed toward Jackson, and then it's just open fields. You can't really see at that distance, but there's two graveled field road entrances right straight across the road from each other. The project will be starting a couple hundred feet north of that. That just gives you an idea of where it starts. It's about a half a mile from Medon-Malesus Road, where the project starts.

All these displays that you see up here, they're basically the same thing that you'll see on the wall displays, so you can look at all of them in more detail when you get over there. This is the second area we wanted to show you. This is a long segment. North is to the right, so going to Jackson is to the

right. Going back to Medon is to the left. This is the area around White Oak Stave Company. If you're familiar with that, that's it. One of the problems that was recognized was the trucks turning in and out there. We need to get them out of the traffic lanes. There will still just be one traffic lane in each direction, but we're going to add, or we're proposing to add, some right-turn lanes so trucks coming from Medon can get over in that right-turn lane. It's kind of tough to see here. You can see it on the displays better. They can get out of the way and turn into the driveway there. Same thing with trucks coming from the north, from Jackson. We're proposing to give them a left turn lane so that they can move out of the way of through traffic and make their turns more safely.

The next area that we wanted to highlight was the area around the north end of Medon-Malesus Road. If you're familiar with that area, you know right now Medon-Malesus Road comes in at kind of a funny angle. It's tough to see. If you pulled out of there, you have to look behind your shoulder and kind of down in a dip, so it's tough to see some of the cars coming from the south. Here on the bottom left side, that's Chip Oak Drive, Chip Oak subdivision. At the

top is South Jackson Church of Christ, just to give you an idea of where that is. What's being proposed with this to help that situation is to take Medon-Malesus Road and curve it into Highway 18 a little bit farther south, where it comes in at more of a 90-degree angle, more of a regular intersection, and safer to pull out of. Also, this area or this section of Highway 18 is kind of low. We're going to raise it up a little bit so that you can see better. We think that will help that area a good bit.

The next area we wanted to show you is sort of a similar situation by Malesus Park, the area with the city ball fields and park there. You've got Raines Springs Road that cuts through like that and Caldwell comes over. There is Highway 18 there and Raines Springs goes on up off the top of the page, going to Bemis. The way Raines Springs crosses 18 is a funny angle, not a real safe situation. Caldwell kind of comes in funny too. Those two intersections are pretty close. What's being proposed as part of this project is to close off that portion of Raines Springs Road and take Caldwell Road and curve it around and bring it in to Highway 18 and lined up with where the park is, the entrance to the parking lot of the park

now. So we're making one intersection there that's at a better angle. And also in this area we'll have left turn lanes that we're proposing. This intersection will have a center left-turn lane so cars can get out of the way as they make those turns and not obstruct the through traffic.

Finally, we wanted to show where the project ends. You can see Highway 45 here on the right side of the screen. You've got Lowe's and Walmart to the south, off the bottom of the screen there. Then that's Raceway service station in the middle. The project will come up and end right in behind the Raceway station and tie into the existing curb and gutter section there and not really change anything in the intersection of Highway 45.

All right. Where are we now in the whole process? The TDOT project development process is sort of five steps. They look nice and sequential on this. Planning, environmental, design, right-of-way, and construction. The planning stage is where they get out and look at an area and decide if a project needs to be done. They decide how long the project needs to be, how many lanes it needs to be, and just the basics of the job. Then it moves into the environmental

stage. Environmental is where they look at things like histories properties or endangered plant and animal species and things like that, just to make sure it's not going to have any undue impacts. Then we move into design and that's where we are on this project now. It's where we do the surveys. We start doing the detailed plans and get the specifics of the design tied down. Once we move from that stage, it moves to the right-of-way stage. TDOT right-of-way agents are contacting property owners if they are going to need to purchase some property, doing appraisals as needed and that kind of thing. Once they have all the property secured, then it moves on to the construction stage. Construction, obviously, is where you start seeing bulldozers and things happening.

As I said, right now we're in the design stage and will be moving forward from that. The next steps immediately after tonight's meeting, after we get the comments in, once you give them to the court reporter and once you write on the comment cards and drop off or mail in, then we take those and we'll sit down with representative from Neel-Schaffer and TDOT, and we'll go through each one of those comments and look at them and see if that's something that we can

incorporate into the plans. Then once we've made any changes that come out of those comments, we'll finalize the plans. We'll turn those over to TDOT, and their right-of-way folks will start doing their thing. They contact property owners. They do appraisals and start the whole right-of-way acquisition process. I don't claim to be an expert on that. We've got people here that can tell you more about that process if you're interested. Then, finally it would move on to construction.

Now, like I said, the main purpose of tonight's meeting is to let you see the plans and then give us your feedback. We want to know what you think, what you like and what you don't like, and what would you like to see done differently. That's an important part of this whole process. Like I've said a couple of times and like Nichole said, too, we've got two ways to do it. The court reporter is over on the side. If you want to just give a verbal statement, she'll be glad to take that down and that becomes part of the official transcript of the meeting. Also the comment cards that you were given, you can fill them out tonight and drop them off or mail them in. Please let us hear what you think. You will be seeing us. We'll be helping you

look at the plans and look at the displays, but telling us things doesn't make it into the official meeting transcript. That's done through the comment cards or the court reporter.

With that, that's the end of the presentation portion. I appreciate everybody's attendance and your attention to the presentation. I think now we're going to do a brief question-and-answer session. Nichole is going to assist with that. After that concludes, then we'll move back to the displays and the plans. We'll be scattered around. Anybody with a name tag on, you can ask us questions and we can help you interpret what you're seeing on the plans and tell you what exactly is happening.

NICHOLE LAWRENCE: Who wants to go first?

THERESA STOVER: 1543 Highway 18, Medon. Do you have any proposed, like, year date that we may get to the right-of-way stage?

BARRY ALEXANDER: The tentative schedule right now -- Seth, do you want me to answer this? The tentative schedule right now for beginning the right-of-way stage and purchasing the property, or beginning the process of purchasing the property, would be in the

spring of 2018.

THERESA STOVER: And when do you think we might get to the construction stage, you know, just a guess?

BARRY ALEXANDER: Construction right now is tentatively scheduled for the earliest to be the fiscal year 2020, which would be fall of 2019 and spring of 2020.

THERESA STOVER: Thank you.

BARRY ALEXANDER: That depends very much on how quickly they can get through the right-of-way stage.

ANTHONY HARDIN: 765 Bolivar Highway. I was just wondering, how close does the right-of-way have to be to a property before you take that and you purchase the house?

BARRY ALEXANDER: That really sort of varies on a case-by-case basis. We'll be glad -- if you've got a concern about your property, come see one of us with the plans. We can look at your property. That's all taken into account in the right-of-way process. Seth, do you want to say anything?

SETH HENDREN: We'll address that in the right-of-way phase when we get to our appraisal

process, which will be next year. We'll have another meeting next year for the right-of-way phase where we'll do similar to what we're doing tonight, but it will be more geared towards right-of-way. So bring that question to the right-of-way phase meeting.

GEORGE JONES: I live at 1234 Highway 18. This is new to a lot of us here. You're proposing just an improvement of what we have, which is a disaster. Highway 18 is a disaster every day. We've lived there about 38 years. In the last four to five years, truck traffic has quadrupled. Car traffic has quadrupled. Now, I don't get out there and count cars and trucks while I'm mowing my yard, but I can estimate and it's tragic. I hope you all decide, whatever you decide, that this will help those of us who live in this community. I don't know that it is, but we'll find out; right? One thing I see that I don't like right off the bat is many places have turn-off lanes off main highways to existing roads. If you're trying to speed up traffic to get to Jackson, please take that under consideration. The fact that we're all just getting a two-lane highway with some bit of improvement is troublesome.

JEANETTE BLAIR: I live at 378 Bolivar

Highway. For 30 years, I've been a Jackson-Madison County school bus driver. I drive this area. I'm hoping that this turning lane doesn't present an opportunity for people to use it to go around the school bus when they're stopped. We stop on Highway 18 a lot. I cross Caldwell Road every morning on that little strip to Raines Springs. I take my life and my kids' because of the curve, and I think that's going to be a wonderful improvement. I think the whole thing is going to help school bus drivers a lot, but we need the police there to help us stop people and make them realize that children are crossing the road, and if they use that turning lane, they'll kill somebody. As a community member, I think it's going to help us a whole lot, and I thank you all for it.

NICHOLE LAWRENCE: If there are not any more questions, we'll conclude. Do you have any more questions? Thank you for coming.

*****COMMENTS TO COURT REPORTER*****

JULIE BARKER: I own 153 Bolivar Highway. My concern is the drainage situation in that area, specifically at Edwards Drive south. I don't know the name of that road on the right. It's a dead-end street. It may be Pine Tree something. The drainage issue is really bad in that area due to the TVA power line that was put in for the industrial park to the rear of my property. Unless that is addressed, it will be a nightmare. Lots of times my property is already under water in the back and the drainage ditch beside me. Please address that situation. Thank you.

MARY LOUISE ARNOLD: 1145 Highway 18, Medon, Tennessee 38356. My comment is we will still have a two-lane highway. We're spending all of this money, and I think they should have gone on with their first proposal for a four-lane highway, which I think would be much safer.

JIMMY ARNOLD: 1145 Highway 18. I think everybody here from the Highway 18 area is very surprised at what we came up with because for the past four, five, six years, maybe even longer than that, we've been talking something similar to Highway 45, and also, of course, this ties in to Highway 64. It really

sounds like what's happened is you've got too many projects going on, and you're moving the money that was designated or was to be designated to the Highway 18 project and moved it to some other project. This doesn't seem like the right thing to do, to tie us up for the next ten years and still end up -- I'm talking about with construction. Then we'd end up with a two-lane road like we have right now. If we're going to do a project, that money needs to remain where Highway 18 was moving when we first started this. There have been several presentations made and public meetings, probably five, six, or seven over the last six or seven years that had the highway that was going to be similar to Highway 45 South.

-CERTIFICATE-

I, CHARLOTTE R. JAQUET, LCR, CCR, being a licensed court reporter in the state of Tennessee, do hereby certify that the preceding is a transcript of the Tennessee Department of Transportation public meeting held in Jackson, Madison County, Tennessee on September 12, 2017.

So certified on the 19th day of September, 2017.



CHARLOTTE R. JAQUET, LCR, CCR

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